



# United States Department of the Interior



National Park Service  
Fort Donelson National Battlefield  
P.O. Box 434  
Dover, Tennessee 37058-0434

A58

September 28, 2005

## **Standard Operating Procedure FODO-A-003**

**To: All Employees, Fort Donelson National Battlefield**

**From: Superintendent, Fort Donelson National Battlefield**

**Subject: Fort Donelson National Cemetery Interments**

**Introduction:** In July 1862, Congress passed legislation giving the President of the United States the authority to purchase land for the establishment of cemeteries “for soldiers who shall die in the service of their country”. The legislation effectively began the National Cemetery system. In 1867, Fort Donelson Cemetery was established as the final resting place for Union soldiers and sailors initially buried in the Fort Donelson area. Fort Donelson National Cemetery is no longer active for new interments; however numerous subsequent interments are conducted each year. The two active national cemeteries administered by the Department of the Interior are Andersonville National Cemetery in Georgia and Andrew Johnson National Cemetery in Tennessee (Department of Veteran Affairs, VA-NCS-IS-1).

**Operating Guidelines:** Director’s Order #61, National Cemetery Operations, is the current operating guideline for the National Park Service administered national cemeteries. This guideline sets forth the procedures for the administration, operation, and maintenance of the National Cemeteries under the direction and control of the Director, National Park Service. It also contains information and historical material that contributes to the interpretation of the guideline. National Park Service Management Policies and 36 CFR12 (Code of Federal Regulations) provide additional guidance. The following Veterans Affairs publications are directly related to DO #61:

- A. National Cemetery System Policy Manual M 40-1, dated May 5, 1975
- B. Operations of National Cemetery Manual M 40-2, dated May 1, 1984
- C. Headstones and Markers Manual M40-3, dated December 1, 1982

### **Persons Eligible for Burial in Fort Donelson National Cemetery:**

#### **Department of Veterans Affairs publication VA-NCS-IS-2**

Fort Donelson National Cemetery is only conducting subsequent interments. The decedent will have a spouse or dependent currently buried at Fort Donelson National Cemetery. The Record of Interment (ROI) cemetery file will contain all the required eligibility forms and records.



**Interment Arrangements and Scheduling:** Processed normally by the Fort Donelson National Cemetery Administrative Staff during office hours Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm excluding federal holidays.

**A. Arranging an Interment with a Funeral Home:** Interment arrangements for a decedent are made by a funeral director. If contacted by a funeral director please use the following guidelines to arrange and schedule an interment.

1. Obtain the name of the funeral home and director, telephone and fax contact information, name of deceased and type of interment requested.
2. Please fax the following forms to the funeral director. Advise the individual that they will need to fax, mail or hand deliver these forms to the park before the interment can be scheduled. The funeral director should be informed that any requested date and time of interment is tentative until a confirmation form is received from the park. Maintain records of all faxed documents and confirmation reports and forward those to the Administrative staff.
  - a. Fax cover sheet
  - b. Interment Application Form (FODO NC-01)
  - c. Certification of Monument Data Form (FODO NC-02)
3. Notify the park Administrative staff and/or assure that the returned faxed forms can be retrieved. Once the completed forms are received, review the information and confirm the requested time and date for interment. Notify the Facility Manager or his/her designee of the requested arrangements. Interments will not normally be scheduled on weekends, federal holidays or prior to 12:00 noon on Monday mornings. No interments should normally be scheduled after 3:00 pm to allow time for the grave to be closed by maintenance staff. Contact the Facility Manager or his/her designee without delay if in doubt that the maintenance staff can accommodate the request. Please complete and send the confirmation fax (Confirmation Fax FODO NC-03) to the requesting funeral director.
4. Forward the completed forms to the park Administrative Staff. Notify the Superintendent, Chief Ranger, Facility Manager and Interpretive staff of the scheduled interment.
5. Cemetery information files and forms are stored in the file cabinet in the Administrative Assistant's office.

**Interment Procedures:**

**A. National Park Service Staff**

1. Make a site assessment, remove necessary headstones to prepare site for opening.
2. Verify grave size requirements. Correct grave depths are: Cremations-3 feet; Single Burial-5 feet (Single veterans with no dependents); Double Depth-7 feet (Married decedents even if the living spouse reports that he/she does not wish to be buried at Fort Donelson National Cemetery.)
3. Open grave.
4. Remove heavy equipment utilized for site preparation and park at Cemetery Shop/Conference Center or out of site of grave or service.
5. Open cemetery gate one hour prior to burial.
6. Direct funeral home personnel to the correct site.
7. Direct hearse to as near grave site as practical.
8. If the decedent is a veteran, lower the flag to half-staff thirty minutes prior to service.
9. Provide a Park Ranger in Class A Dress uniform to assist with traffic control, parking, and to

represent Fort Donelson National Cemetery.

10. In rare cases, the National Park Service employee representing the cemetery may be asked to present the burial flag to the next-of-kin. The following is what should be said when presenting the flag: “This flag is offered by a grateful nation in memory of the faithful service provided by your loved one.”

**B. Funeral Director**

1. Prepare the grave site for the service. Provide and setup any tent or canopy, chairs, vault, and lowering device.
2. Transport the remains by hearse to the grave site. If a vault is used, the funeral director must remain at the grave site until the vault/grave liner is sealed.
3. Provide the National Park Service with a copy of Permits for any State-to-State transport.

**After the Interment Service:** Raise the flag to full-staff, close cemetery gate and, once funeral party has **departed**, begin closing the grave and returning the site to normal conditions.

**Administrative Procedures**

- A.** If the Certification of Monument Data Form (FODO NC-02) has not been received by park staff the Administrative Assistant will mail it along with a self-addressed stamped envelope to the next of kin or funeral director and request the information for the monument. Data form can also be faxed to the funeral director. Ensure that the information is correct and accurate.

All interments at Fort Donelson are now subsequent interments. The decedent should have a spouse or dependent currently buried in the National Cemetery and a VA Form 40-4956, “Record of Interment (ROI) will be in the cemetery information files. The Record of Interment file will have the correct grave number for the new interment listed.

- B.** To request the monument complete VA form 40-4956, “Record of Interment” and mail the original and one copy to the Veterans Administration at the following address:
- Veterans Administration  
Memorial Programs Service  
(41A1) Department of Veterans Affairs  
5109 Russell Road  
Quantico, VA 22134-3903
- C.** Maintenance personnel are responsible for carefully checking headstones as they arrive to insure the inscribed information is correct. Staff will then set the marker as soon as weather conditions permit. A picture will be taken and given to the Administrative Assistant for attachment to the headstone order and placed in the file.
- D.** The Administrative Assistant will call next of kin to advise when headstone is in place and also will address a letter of condolence to the next of kin and attach a copy of the floral regulations and a copy of a cemetery brochure or map showing the grave site location.
- E.** Administrative Assistant will forward a copy of all information to the Park Ranger staff to update files and system.

- F. A Park Ranger will update the cemetery data base at the visitor center and print an updated and current roster for placement in the cemetery information shelter.

**Memorialization**

- A. The installation of a monument, memorial, tablet, structure, or other commemorative installation in the park without the authorization of the Director of the National Park Service is prohibited.
- B. The scattering of human ashes from cremations is prohibited, except pursuant to the terms and conditions of a permit, or in designated areas according to conditions which may be established by the Superintendent.
- C. Failure to abide by area designations and established conditions is prohibited.
- D. Violations of the terms and conditions of a permit issued in accordance with this section is prohibited and may result in the suspension or revocation of the permit.